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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

JANUARY 2015 Grand Jur 15 00611

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

SEAN DAVID MORTON and MELISSA MORTON, a.k.a. MELISSA THOMSON MORTON, a.k.a. MELISSA THOMSON, a.k.a. MELISSA ANN THOMSON, a.k.a. MELISSA ANN MORTON,

Defendants.

CR No. 15-

INDICTMENT

[18 U.S.C. § 371: Conspiracy To Defraud The United States; 18 U.S.C. § 287: False Claims To The United States; 18 U.S.C. § 514: Fictitious Obligations; 18 U.S.C. § 2(b):Causing An Act To Be Done]

The Grand Jury charges:

COUNT ONE

[18 U.S.C. § 371]

At times relevant to this Indictment:

INTRODUCTORY ALLEGATIONS

Defendants SEAN DAVID MORTON and MELISSA MORTON, a.k.a. MELISSA THOMSON MORTON, a.k.a. MELISSA THOMSON, a.k.a. MELISSA ANN THOMSON, a.k.a. MELISSA ANN MORTON (MELISSA MORTON) (collectively referred to as defendants) were married and resided in Hermosa Beach, California, which is located in Los Angeles County and within the Central District of California.

- 2. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) was and is an agency of the United States Department of the Treasury, responsible for administering and enforcing the tax laws of the United States.
- 3. IRS Forms 1099 were and are used to report, among other things, interest income and associated withholding to the IRS.

 "Original Issue Discount" (OID) income, typically reported on IRS Forms 1099-OID, was and is a form of interest income commonly realized on debt instruments issued at a discount to or purchased for less than the ultimate redemption value of the debt instrument.

B. OBJECT OF THE CONSPIRACY

4. Beginning in or about March 2009, and continuing at least until in or about April 2013, in Los Angeles County, within the Central District of California, defendants SEAN DAVID MORTON and MELISSA MORTON, together with others known and unknown to the Grand Jury, knowingly combined, conspired, and agreed to defraud the United States by impeding, impairing, obstructing, and defeating the lawful governmental functions of a government agency, namely the IRS, by deceitful and dishonest means.

C. MANNER AND MEANS OF THE CONSPIRACY

The object of the conspiracy was carried out, and to be carried out, in substance, as follows:

5. Defendants, acting together and separately, prepared, and aided in the preparation of defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON's 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008 income tax returns, tax forms, and other documents and submitted said false returns with attached false documents to the IRS.

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- 6. Defendants, acting together and separately, prepared, and aided in the preparation of defendant MELISSA MORTON'S 2007 income tax return, tax forms, and other documents and submitted said false return with attached false documents to the IRS.
- 7. Defendants caused multiple copies and multiple versions of their income tax returns to be submitted to various IRS service centers throughout the United States in 2009 and 2010.
- 8. Defendants falsely reported their filing status as "single" or did not report a filing status, and filed returns separately.
- 9. Defendants attached false IRS Forms 1099-OID to their federal income tax returns. These Forms 1099-OID falsely reported that the defendants were the recipients of original issue discount income from various payers, and that federal income tax had been withheld on said interest income.
- 10. On several income tax returns, defendants falsely reported to the IRS that they owed no federal income tax, but that income tax had been withheld and paid to the IRS on the purported original issue discount income. On other income tax returns, defendants falsely reported to the IRS that the federal income tax owed on the purported original issue discount income was less than the income tax that had been withheld and paid to the IRS. In both instances, defendants sought refunds of said purported withholding.
- 11. Defendants submitted to the IRS fictitious financial instruments entitled "Coupon for Setoff, Settlement, and Closure" which were made payable to the "Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, C.I.D."

- . .

- 12. Defendants claimed that these fictitious financial instruments were a purported bond in exchange for the refunds they sought from the IRS.
- 13. Defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted a false IRS Form 843, Claims for Refund and Request for Abatement, in the name of defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON for 2006, and claimed a refund to which defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON was not entitled.
- 14. Defendant MELISSA MORTON submitted a false IRS Form 843, Claims for Refund and Request for Abatement, in the name of defendant MELISSA MORTON for 2007, and claimed a refund to which defendant MELISSA MORTON was not entitled.
- 15. Defendants submitted to the IRS fictitious financial instruments entitled "Non-Negotiable Discharging Bond and Indemnity" which purported to be bonds issued by defendants to discharge and set off defendants' liability with the IRS.
- 16. Defendants submitted copious amounts of correspondence, documents, and miscellaneous IRS forms to the IRS in an effort to interfere with the administration of the income tax laws.

D. OVERT ACTS

- 17. On or about March 13, 2009, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted to the IRS, a false and fraudulent U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, Form 1040, in the name of defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON, for the calendar year 2006, which claimed a refund in the amount of \$1,560,634. Along with this 2006 income tax return, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted to the IRS false and fraudulent Forms 1099-OID.
- 18. On or about March 13, 2009, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted to the IRS, a false and

fraudulent U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, Form 1040, in the name of defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON, for the calendar year 2007, which claimed a refund in the amount of \$1,754,594. Along with this 2007 income tax return, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted to the IRS false and fraudulent Forms 1099-OID.

- 19. On or about March 13, 2009, defendant MELISSA MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted a false and fraudulent U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, Form 1040, in the name of defendant MELISSA MORTON, for the calendar year 2007, which claimed a refund in the amount of \$12,305. Along with this 2007 income tax return, defendant MELISSA MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted to the IRS a false and fraudulent Form 1099-OID.
- 20. On or about April 14, 2009, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted a false and fraudulent U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, Form 1040, in the name of defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON, for the calendar year 2005, which claimed a refund in the amount of \$136,077. Along with this 2005 income tax return, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted to the IRS false and fraudulent Forms 1099-OID.
- 21. On or about April 14, 2009, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted a false and fraudulent U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, Form 1040, in the name of defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON, for the calendar year 2008, which claimed a refund in the amount of \$479,506.
- 22. On or about April 17, 2009, the same day an income tax refund in the amount of \$480,322.55 for defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON's 2008 income tax return was issued by the IRS and transferred into defendants' joint account at Washington Mutual Bank, Account #3324,

defendants opened two jointly held bank accounts with Washington Mutual Bank, Accounts #4429 and #5891.

23. On or about April 17, 2009, defendant MELISSA MORTON

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24. On or about April 17, 2009, defendant MELISSA MORTON transferred \$250,000 from Account #3324 into Account #5891.

transferred \$110,467.99 from Account #3324 into Account #4249.

25. On or about April 17, 2009, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON withdrew \$70,000 in cash from Account #3324.

26. On or about October 29, 2009, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON mailed a fifty-two page packet of documents to the IRS in response to October 26, 2009, levies issued against Accounts #3324 and #4249, and a third account that belonged solely to defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON, account #6716.

27. On or about November 12, 2009, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON mailed a document to the IRS entitled "Notice of Contest of Lien," which claimed, in relevant part, that any tax liability he owed to the United States had been satisfied.

28. On or about March 3, 2010, defendant MELISSA MORTON mailed a letter to the IRS, asserting that the IRS levied her "personal and private accounts, which are not joint accounts with any other party[?]" and "illegally removed funds from my personal and private checking accounts[?]." Defendant MELISSA MORTON included a copy of correspondence from JP Morgan Chase to defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON regarding Accounts #3324, #4249, and #6716.

29. On or about March 15, 2010, defendant MELISSA MORTON mailed a second letter to the IRS, and reiterated that the IRS levied against her "personal and private checking accounts, without lawful justification," that "SEAN DAVID MORTON(S) name appears no-where on

the checking accounts you've unlawfully levied." Defendant MELISSA MORTON included a copy of correspondence from JP Morgan Chase to defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON regarding Accounts #3324, #4249, and #6716.

- 30. On or about March 17, 2010, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON mailed a twelve-page document to the IRS entitled "First Notice/ Certificate of Non-Response and Dishonor/Reminder of Default", falsely claiming, among other things, that a presumption had arisen that the IRS had consented to a lien against IRS assets in the amount of \$900,000.
- 31. On or about March 26, 2010, defendant MELISSA MORTON mailed the IRS a thirty-six page package of documents, which included a document entitled "Default in Dishonor/Certificate of Estoppel," which stated that the IRS had "personally levied and liened [sic] my personal and private checking accounts, when Sean David Morton is not a party to or part of, whereby his authenticated signature appears no-where therein." Defendant MELISSA MORTON included a copy of correspondence from JP Morgan Chase to defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON regarding Accounts #3324, #4249, and #6716.
- 32. On or about March 31, 2010, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON mailed the IRS a multi-page document entitled "SECOND NOTICE/
 CERTIFICATE OF NON-RESPONSE AND DISHONOR/REMINDER OF DEFAULT,"
 wherein he reiterated his position that the IRS was subject to a
 \$900,000 lien for the benefit of defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON.
- 33. On or about April 13, 2010, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON mailed a multi-page document to the IRS entitled "THIRD AND FINAL NOTICE/CERTIFICATE OF NON-RESPONSE AND DISHONOR/REMINDER OF DEFAULT,"

wherein defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON stated that he had a lien against the assets the IRS.

- 34. On or about April 14, 2010, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON mailed a document to the IRS entitled "FIRST NOTICE OF DEMAND," wherein defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON stated, among other things, that the IRS had no valid liens upon his property, and demanded that the IRS "remove" any lien and/or levy filings made against him.
- 35. On or about April 14, 2010, defendant MELISSA MORTON mailed a document to the IRS entitled "FIRST NOTICE OF DEMAND," wherein defendant MELISSA MORTON stated, among other things, that the IRS had no valid liens upon her property, and demanded that the IRS "remove" any lien and/or levy filings made against her.
- 36. On or about April 21, 2010, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON mailed a document to the IRS entitled "SECOND NOTICE OF DEMAND," wherein defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON stated, among other things, that the IRS had no valid liens upon his property, and demanded that the IRS "remove" any lien and/or levy filings made against him.
- 37. On or about April 21, 2010, defendant MELISSA MORTON mailed a document to the IRS entitled "SECOND NOTICE OF DEMAND," wherein defendant MELISSA MORTON stated that the IRS had no valid liens upon her property, and demanded that the IRS "remove" any lien and/or levy filings made against her.
- 38. On or about April 28, 2010, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON mailed a document to the IRS entitled "THIRD NOTICE OF DEMAND," wherein defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON stated, among other things, that the IRS had no valid liens upon his property, and demanded that the IRS "remove" any lien and/or levy filings made against him.

- 39. On or about May 3, 2010, defendant MELISSA MORTON mailed a document to the IRS entitled "THIRD NOTICE OF DEMAND," wherein defendant MELISSA MORTON stated that the IRS had no valid liens upon her property, and demanded that the IRS "remove" any lien and/or levy filings made against her.
- 40. On or about August 31, 2010, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted to the IRS, a false and fraudulent U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, Form 1040, in the name of defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON, for the calendar year 2005, which claimed a refund in the amount of \$180,326. Along with this 2005 income tax return, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted to the IRS false and fraudulent Forms 1099-OID.
- 41. On or about August 31, 2010, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted to the IRS, a false and fraudulent U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, Form 1040, in the name of defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON, for the calendar year 2006, which claimed a refund in the amount of \$180,326. Along with this 2006 income tax return, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted to the IRS false and fraudulent Forms 1099-OID.
- 42. On or about August 31, 2010, defendant MELISSA MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted a false and fraudulent U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, Form 1040, in the name of defendant MELISSA MORTON, for the calendar year 2007, which claimed a refund in the amount of \$12,305. Along with this 2007 income tax return, defendant MELISSA MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted to the IRS a false and fraudulent Form 1099-OID.
- 43. On or about November 5, 2010, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted a false and fraudulent U.S.

Individual Income Tax Return, Form 1040, in the name of defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON, for the calendar year 2007. Along with this 2007 income tax return for defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted to the IRS false and fraudulent Forms 1099-OID, a "Letter Rogatory and Affidavit in Support", which falsely claimed a refund was due to defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON in the amount of \$1,762,289.25, and a fictitious financial instrument titled "COUPON FOR SETOFF, SETTLEMENT, AND CLOSURE," in the amount of \$5,286,867.75, dated November 5, 2010, made payable to the "Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, C.I.D."

- 44. On or about November 19, 2010, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted a false and fraudulent U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, Form 1040, in the name of defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON, for the calendar year 2006, which claimed a refund in the amount of \$2,809,921.18. Along with this 2006 income tax return, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted to the IRS false and fraudulent Forms 1099-OID, and a frivolous document titled "COUPON FOR SETOFF, SETTLEMENT, AND CLOSURE," in the amount of \$8,429,763.54, dated November 19, 2010, made payable to the "Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, C.I.D."
- 45. On or about November 19, 2010, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted a false and fraudulent U.S.

 Individual Income Tax Return, Form 1040, in the name of defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON, for the calendar year 2005, which claimed a refund in the amount of \$244,230. Along with this 2005 income tax return,

defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted to the IRS false and fraudulent Forms 1099-OID.

- 46. On or about December 3, 2010, defendant MELISSA MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted a false and fraudulent U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, Form 1040, in the name of defendant MELISSA MORTON, for the calendar year 2007, which claimed a refund in the amount of \$14,816.70. Along with this 2007 income tax return for defendant MELISSA MORTON, defendant MELISSA MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted to the IRS a false and fraudulent Form 1099-OID, and a frivolous document titled "COUPON FOR SETOFF, SETTLEMENT, AND CLOSURE," in the amount of \$44,450.10, dated December 3, 2010, made payable to the "Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, C.I.D."
- 47. On or about June 21, 2012, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted a false and fraudulent Claim for Refund and Request for Abatement, IRS Form 843, in the name of defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON, for the calendar year 2006, which claimed a refund in the amount of \$1,560,634.
- 48. On or about June 21, 2012, defendant MELISSA MORTON submitted and caused to be submitted a false and fraudulent Claim for Refund and Request for Abatement, IRS Form 843, in the name of defendant MELISSA MORTON, for the calendar year 2007, which claimed a refund in the amount of \$12,727.
- 49. On or about April 2, 2013, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON submitted a false and fictitious financial instrument to the IRS, entitled "Non-Negotiable Discharging Bond and Indemnity" ("Bond") in the amount of \$10 million dollars.

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50. On or about April 2, 2013, defendant MELISSA MORTON submitted a false and fictitious financial instrument to the IRS, entitled "Non-Negotiable Discharging Bond and Indemnity" (hereinafter "Bond") in the amount of \$600,000.

COUNT TWO

[18 U.S.C. §§ 287; 2(b)]

The factual allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 50 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated into Count Two as if set forth fully herein.

On or about November 19, 2010, in Los Angeles County, within the Central District of California, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON knowingly made and presented, and knowingly and willfully caused to be made and presented, to the Internal Revenue Service, an agency of the United States Department of Treasury, a false, fictitious, and fraudulent federal income tax return, U.S. Individual Income Tax Return for the year 2006, which constituted a claim against the United States for a federal income tax refund. return was false, fictitious, and fraudulent, in that, as defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON well knew, he did not have income tax withholdings in the amount of \$2,809,921.18 as reported on the tax return, and was not entitled to the tax refund claimed on the tax return in the amount of \$2,809,921.18.

COUNT THREE

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 53. The factual allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 50 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated into Count Three

as if set forth fully herein.

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\$2,528,929.00.

[18 U.S.C. §§ 287; 2(b)]

54. On or about June 26, 2012, in Los Angeles County, within the Central District of California, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON knowingly made and presented, and knowingly and willfully caused to be made and presented, to the Internal Revenue Service, an agency of the United States Department of Treasury, a false, fictitious, and fraudulent IRS Form 843, Claim for Refund and Request for Abatement, for 2006, which constituted a claim against the United States for a federal income tax refund. The IRS Form 843 was false, fictitious, and fraudulent, in that, as defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON well knew, he was not entitled to an income tax refund in the amount of \$1,560,634 based on false income tax withholdings in the amount of

COUNT FOUR

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[18 U.S.C. §§ 287; 2(b)]

The factual allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 50 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated into Count Four as if fully set forth herein.

On or about December 4, 2010, in Los Angeles County, within 56. the Central District of California, defendant MELISSA MORTON, a.k.a. MELISSA THOMSON MORTON, a.k.a. MELISSA THOMSON, a.k.a. MELISSA ANN THOMSON, a.k.a. MELISSA ANN MORTON (MELISSA MORTON) knowingly made and presented, and knowingly and willfully caused to be made and presented, to the Internal Revenue Service, an agency of the United States Department of Treasury, a false, fictitious, and fraudulent federal income tax return, U.S. Individual Income Tax Return for the year 2007, which constituted a claim against the United States for a federal income tax refund. The tax return was false, fictitious, and fraudulent, in that, as defendant MELISSA MORTON well knew, she did not have income tax withholdings in the amount of \$14,816.70 as reported on the tax return, and was not entitled to the tax refund claimed on the tax return in the amount of \$14,816.70.

COUNT FIVE

[18 U.S.C. §§ 287; 2(b)]

The factual allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 50 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated into Count Five as if fully set forth herein.

58. On or about June 26, 2012, in Los Angeles County, within the Central District of California, defendant MELISSA MORTON, a.k.a. MELISSA THOMSON MORTON, a.k.a. MELISSA THOMSON, a.k.a. MELISSA ANN THOMSON, a.k.a. MELISSA ANN MORTON (MELISSA MORTON) knowingly made and presented, and knowingly and willfully caused to be made and presented, to the Internal Revenue Service, an agency of the United States Department of Treasury, a false, fictitious, and fraudulent IRS Form 843, Claim for Refund and Request for Abatement, for 2007, which constituted a claim against the United States for a federal income tax refund. The IRS Form 843 was false, fictitious, and fraudulent, in that, as defendant MELISSA MORTON well knew, she was not entitled to an income tax refund in the amount of \$12,727.

COUNT SIX

[18 U.S.C. §§ 514(a); 2(b)]

as if fully set forth herein.

The factual allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 50 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated into Count Six

On or about November 5, 2010, in Los Angeles County, within the Central District of California, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON, with the intent to defraud, passed, uttered, presented, and offered, and attempt and cause the same, a false and fictitious instrument, document, and other item, namely a "Coupon for Setoff, Settlement, and Closure" in the amount of \$5,286,867.75, appearing, representing, purporting, and contriving, through scheme and artifice, to be an actual security or other financial instrument issued under the authority of the United States and other political subdivision of the United States.

COUNT SEVEN

[18 U.S.C. §§ 514(a); 2(b)]

- The factual allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 50 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated into Count Seven as if fully set forth herein.
- 62. On or about April 2, 2013, in Los Angeles County, within the Central District of California, defendant SEAN DAVID MORTON, with the intent to defraud, passed, uttered, presented, and offered, and attempt and cause the same, a false and fictitious instrument, document, and other item, namely a "Non-Negotiable Discharging Bond and Indemnity" in the amount of \$10,000,000, appearing, representing, purporting, and contriving, through scheme and artifice, to be an actual security or other financial instrument issued under the authority of the United States and other political subdivision of the United States.

1 COUNT EIGHT

[18 U.S.C. §§ 514(a); 2(b)]

- 63. The factual allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 50 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated into Count Eight as if fully set forth herein.
- 64. On or about April 2, 2013, in Los Angeles County, within the Central District of California, defendant MELISSA MORTON, a.k.a. MELISSA THOMSON MORTON, a.k.a. MELISSA THOMSON, a.k.a. MELISSA ANN THOMSON, a.k.a. MELISSA ANN MORTON (MELISSA MORTON), with the intent to defraud, passed, uttered, presented, and offered, and attempt and cause the same, a false and fictitious instrument, document, and other item, namely a "Non-Negotiable Discharging Bond and Indemnity" in the amount of \$600,000, appearing, representing, purporting, and contriving, through scheme and artifice, to be an actual security or

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other financial instrument issued under the authority of the United States and other political subdivision of the United States. A TRUE BILL Foreperson EILEEN M. DECKER United States Attorney LAWRENCE S. MIDDLETON Assistant United States Attorney Chief,/Criminal Division SANDRA R. BROWN Assistant United States Attorney Chief, Tax Division VĂLERIE L. MAKARÆWZCZ JAMES C. HUGHES Assistant United States Attorneys Tax Division